



Pediatric Development
Center

Newsletter
October 2008



We provide occupational therapy evaluation, treatment and consultation for children with developmental delays, autism/Asperger, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, sensory processing disorders, attention, behavioral concerns, handwriting, and other areas of weakness.

Contact us for further information:
125 Presumpscot St. Portland, ME.
(207) 699-5531

Parent Support Group:

We want to support parents in any way we can and would like to have a monthly meeting to discuss your concerns. Please call the office to let us know when would be good for you and we will put together a meeting. 699-5531

Good Books:

Fine Motor Olympics by:
Marcia Bridgeman, OTR/L
(available through Therapro)

Write from the Start by: Ion
Teodorescu & Lois M. Addy

Handwriting Without Tears &
Cursive Success by: Jan Z.
Olsen, OTR

Handwriting & Desk Posture

There may be two factors that contribute to a child's difficulty assuming and holding sitting postures while performing table-top fine motor tasks.

FIRST: Poorly designed and/or fitted sitting and writing furniture.

SECOND: Low body awareness, which is observable in many young children. They lack postural sensitivity for making minute adjustments to keep their bodies upright in space. The chair height should allow the child's heels firm contact with the floor. The height of the desk should be two inches above the bended elbow when the child is seated squarely on his chair to write. The slant of the paper should run parallel to the line of the arm when the hands are relaxed and together at midline on desk surface.



Pencil Holding

The best way to hold a pencil is by using a tripod grasp. When using this grasp the hand gets less tired and the movements are more precise. Achieving this grasp will take practice. Finding time each day to review the skills will be especially helpful during kindergarten and first grade. Pencil grips can be used to help promote proper grasp. There are many different grips. Finding the one that works best for you will help to keep your fingers in the best position.

THE GRASP: For a tripod grasp: hold the pencil between the tips of your thumb and your pointing finger and support it against the side of your middle finger.



Fine Motor

Fine motor skills are foundation requirements for good eye-hand coordination (so a child can draw, write, turn pages, use utensils and other tools, build with legos and do jigsaw puzzles), for precise eye-motor movement, and for articulating speech and expressing language.

Poor hand coordination skills may present themselves in children who:

- * avoid ordinary classroom activities such as writing exercises, art projects, and science experiments
- * avoid the use of tools, such as crayons, pencils, scissors, hole punches, staplers, screwdrivers, or tweezers
- * have poor handwriting
- * have poor self-help skills
- * are considered a “messy eater”

Fine Motor Games

Clothespin Togs:

What you need:

- * clothes basket
- * clothes (scarves, gloves, ski caps, neckties, etc.)
- * plastic or wooden clothespins with springs

What to do:

* go on a treasure hunt around the house to find clothes and accessories that are suitable for a dress-up activity. You can either give verbal directions to specific objects or go with them to hunt for items, depending on their capabilities

* have the child select an item of clothing and use the clothespin to attach the item to any part of the body. Encourage the child to be as silly as they want. For example: hang a hat from your elbow or a scarf from your knee

Benefits:

*promotes a tripod grasp that is needed to effectively use common “tools” including forks, pencils, and paintbrushes

Tooth pick Constructions:

What you need:

- * box of toothpicks

- * food chunks (grapes, berries, banana, apple, melon, cucumber, peas, corn kernels, popcorn, cubes of cheese, tofu, chicken, turkey, ham, marshmallows)

What to do:

* stick the toothpicks into food chunks to construct different objects. Houses, scaffolding, robots, spaceships, sea urchins, and other creatures.

Benefits:

* improves pincer skills, translation movement, hand dexterity, and bilateral coordination

Fine Motor Crafts



Glue Ghosts

Lay a length of thick string or yarn on a piece of waxed paper in a basic ghost shape, leaving the bottom open. Carefully fill the area outside the string with glue and then smooth the glue with a craft stick or the back of a plastic spoon. Add googly eyes and a construction paper mouth. Let the glue dry overnight. Remove the ghost from the waxed paper and trim any excess glue from the outline. Use a pushpin to poke a hole at the top and thread through a string for hanging.

Spider Handprint Craft

* Dip both hands in black paint and print them on paper

with fingers facing away from each other and heels of the hand touching

* When dry, cut out the entire printed shape and slightly bend the fingerprints to make legs

* Poke a pin through the center and thread a string through for hanging, taping it to the underside of the spider

* Add wiggly eyes if desired

Fingerprint Tree

Stamp the side of your hand in brown paint to create the trunk of the tree. Press your fingertips in different colored paint (red, orange, yellow, green) to create the leaves of a fall tree. Challenge your child to create a pile of leaves and children playing in them, using nothing but fingerprints and a felt tip pen for details.

Handprint Leaves

Draw a large trunk and have your child make handprint leaves to decorate. They can use finger paint to put leaves on, or trace their hand and cut them out to paste them to the tree trunk.

